

Philadelphia as a champion of the small states.

11. Convention rules were simple and took into account courtesy as well as convenience. It was a age of formal manners. George Wythe of Virginia, chairman of the rules committee, had a keen eye, a deeply lined forehead, and at age 60 resembled a sinewy old eagle. "Every member," read Wythe, "rising to speak, shall address the President, and whilst he shall be speaking, none shall pass between them or hold discourse with another, or read a book, pamphlet or paper, printed or manuscript."

12. Seven states were to make a quorum, and all questions to be decided "by a greater number of these which shall be fully represented." There was an excellent rule providing for reconsideration of matters that had already been passed on by a majority. Young Richard Dobbs Spaight of North Carolina suggested it: "The House may not be precluded, by a vote upon any question, from revising the subject manner of it when they see cause."

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
APPROPRIATIONS ACT—H.R. 2607

SPEECH OF

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, once again the U.S. Congress has exhibited a double standard toward the people of Haiti. The District of Columbia appropriations conference report provides a badly needed resolution to the District's financial problems. This conference report also contains certain immigration policy provisions that are intended to counteract a provision in the extreme, mean-spirited immigration reform legislation passed by the Republican-led 104th Congress. I commend the efforts made by House and Senate conferees to stop the potential deportation of hundreds of thousands of Central American and Eastern European immigrants; however, they specifically left thousands of Haitian immigrants out in the cold. This is tragically unfair and must not be overlooked. The only discernible difference between Haitians and these other refugees is that Haitians are black. I cannot believe that in 1997 the U.S. Congress has chosen to make critical policy decisions in this irrational manner.

The United States Government helped create conditions in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador that resulted in great numbers of people from these countries fleeing their homelands and searching for relief on our shores. In spite of this, Republicans in Congress have attacked immigrants on all fronts, including those from these Central American nations. In addition to cutting back on the types of social services and benefits immigrants could apply for, the ill-conceived Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 created new rules for Central American refugees which would effectively disqualify the vast majority of these immigrants from attaining citizenship and set them up for deportation. Before the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 was passed, these immigrants were permitted to apply for suspension of deportation and then apply for permanent resi-

dence if they met several rigorous requirements. They had to follow a painstaking, labyrinthine process to become American citizens. American citizenship is so prized by our Central American neighbors that they were happy to play by these complicated rules. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 changed the rules for these immigrants midstream and would have forced many of them to return to their homelands even though many have established themselves as productive members of our society. The District of Columbia appropriations legislation treats all these groups with compassion.

The conference report even provides relief for refugees from certain Eastern bloc countries in which we did not become involved to create a refugee situation. Inexplicably, Haitians were not afforded the same treatment, even though their plight was just as terrible and their desire to become American citizens is just as great.

The United States must acknowledge that its support for previous Haitian regimes has forced thousands of Haitian refugees to seek relief here in America. Since the military coup in Haiti, the United States has allowed thousands of these refugees to apply for citizenship. Haitians are still endangering themselves, risking death in order to reach our shores. Clearly, the situation in Haiti is not that much better than it is in Central America and the former Eastern bloc countries. The Haitian Government continues to be in disarray. The country's infrastructure continues to decay at a rapid rate while more than \$1 billion in foreign assistance remains unspent. More than half the population eligible for work is estimated to be jobless at the same time that the cost of living is rising at an alarming rate. The situation in Haiti clearly calls for more compassionate action by the United States. Unfortunately, a proposal by Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus [CBC] to provide relief for Haitian immigrants was not included in the District of Columbia appropriations conference report. This CBC-backed proposal would simply grant Haitians the same treatment given to Nicaraguans under the District of Columbia appropriations conference report. Like Central Americans and Eastern Europeans, Haitian immigrants have a powerful desire to become American citizens. They have established families and provided American businesses with skilled, dedicated workers. In my district in particular, Haitians are a vital part of the local economy and culture. Why are they not afforded the same treatment by American policy makers? It is unthinkable that Haitians were treated differently solely because they are black; however, the circumstances leave me no choice but to conclude that this Congress considers the suffering of black people to be of less importance.

We have settled in this country refugees from many war-torn nations. The people of Haiti have suffered long enough from the excesses of their former despotic leaders and the shortsightedness of our foreign policy. I plan to dedicate the second session of the 105th Congress to working with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus and other Members of Congress to ensure that equal treatment of Haitian immigrants is achieved. I challenge the House leadership and the administration to make justice for Haitians a pri-

ority in 1998. It is time that we settle this moral debt that we owe the people of Haiti.

EAST TIMOR—NEED FOR A
POLITICAL SOLUTION

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 13, 1997

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, there have been disturbing developments in East Timor, which was invaded and illegally occupied by Indonesia in 1975 and is an area that has long been of concern to me and many of my colleagues. On November 14, the Roman Catholic Bishop, Carlos Ximenes Belo, stated that Indonesian security forces had acted with "incalculable brutality" against students at the University of East Timor. The security forces are said to have burst into the university, opening fire on a group of students and injuring about five seriously. Six others are still in custody as a result of this incident. Amnesty International has asked that those in custody have proper access to legitimate legal advice, and has also called for an investigation into this incident, involving the excessive use of force by Indonesian military and policy.

This is only the latest in a series of violent incidents since Bishop Belo returned last December from Oslo after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. Only in the past 2 months, there have been brutal actions by security forces or those connected to them, near the towns of Viqueque and Ossu. Paul Moore, Jr., the retired Episcopal Bishop of New York, who recently visited East Timor for the second time since 1989, reports that one paramilitary group under Indonesian control throws rocks nearly every night at the home of Bishop Belo's mother and sister in the town of Baucau. I share Bishop Moore's view that such actions are intolerable. And if they can be directed at the family of someone as prominent as a Nobel Peace Laureate, how many can really be safe?

Bishop Moore attended some of the religious festivities that took place around East Timor's highest peak, Mount Ramelau, on October 6-7. As Bishop Moore puts it, "What I saw was an entirely peaceful gathering of tens of thousands of people motivated by their faith. But many in the clergy in East Timor affirm that provocateurs under the control of the Indonesian military have dedicated themselves to marring such events at every opportunity."

This is apparently what happened on Mount Ramelau on October 7, when the stabbing of a young man led to the cancellation of a long-awaited religious procession. As Bishop Moore stated, "This incident is seen by senior clergy, rightly or wrongly, as a deliberate attempt by those under the control of Indonesian authorities to thwart the aspirations of the East Timorese people—in this instance, ruining a day of piety and peace."

However, it is clear to Bishop Moore, and especially to Bishop Belo, that the problem in East Timor is not a religious problem but is political in nature, just as the recent incident at the University of East Timor was rooted in the heavy-handed, illegal Indonesian military occupation. The pattern is one of conscious use and creation of violent incidents, religious and otherwise, by security forces. If such incidents